

City Council South Platte River Committee - Brownfields Program Briefing – January 8, 2025

Empowering Denver's communities to live better, longer

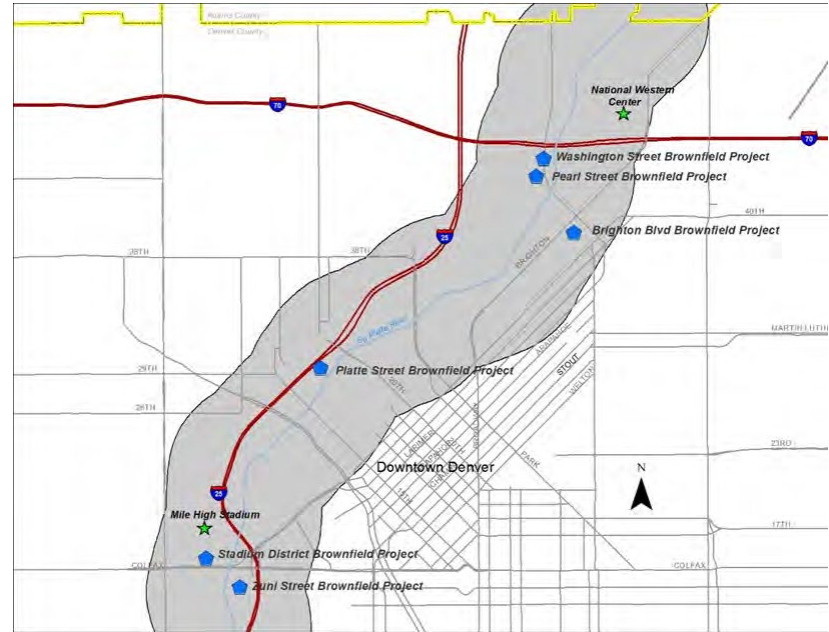
2013 South Platte Area-Wide Plan

- EPA pilot grant to highlight planning aspect under brownfield assessment grants
- 2010-2012 Collaboration with CPD and DPHE
- 5 catalytic sites selected from 18 evaluated
- Extensive community and stakeholder engagement



2015 South Platte Brownfields Assessment Grant

- 6 project sites including Mile High Stadium District & Steam on the Platte
- Contamination type and degree varied
- Generally, legacy industrial and landfill/urban fill contamination



ELUP Projects

- Central Platte Campus – brownfields award winner
- River Mile
- WATR/Denver Urban Waterways Restoration Project
- Sun Valley/Xcel Zuni Power Plant
- National Western Center

Env. Quality Programs

- E. Coli, nitrogen, phosphorus, metals and benthic macroinvertebrate stream sampling
- Green infrastructure
- Partnership with CSU Spur Campus on WQ monitoring



**SOUTH PLATTE RIVER URBAN
WATERS PARTNERSHIP (SPRUWP)
BRIEFING FOR DENVER CITY
COUNCIL S. PLATTE RIVER
COMMITTEE**

JANUARY 8, 2025

BACKGROUND

- Stacey Eriksen spent 4 years on loan to the City and County of Denver from 2005-2008 as the brownfields coordinator to the City and County of Denver.
- Stacey helped Denver create a brownfields program, affordable green housing program, an Energy Star New Homes program, worked on GreenPrint Denver and Mayor Hickenlooper's Water Quality Initiative with multiple staff and programs at the City.
- The South Platte River Urban Waters Partnership was created in 2011 based on work with Denver, multiple staff, The Greenway Foundation, and a number of non-profits.
- An urban waters plan for action was created by EPA in 2011 for Mayor Michael Hancock.

SPRUWP ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

SPRUWP Full Partnership

- Meets quarterly for partners to connect and hear about ongoing projects through presentations

SPRUWP Advisory Committee

- Oversees administrative and budgetary tasks for SPRUWP, including endorsing projects on SPRUWP's behalf

SPRUWP Science and Data Committee

- Formed to work together to develop projects devoted to improving and expanding access to data and scientific findings related to water quality and restoration

SPRUWP Education and Outreach Committee

- Formed to provide opportunities for educators to collaborate on projects and share best practices related to expanding awareness and education of urban water issues and developing future water stewards and practitioners

ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT AT A GLANCE

- Documents the activities of the Partnership from 2011 to 2023
- Provides high-level overview of the structure and organization of the Partnership
- Describes the big and small projects that the Partnership has accomplished over 12 years





OVERALL BENEFITS OF THE PARTNERSHIP

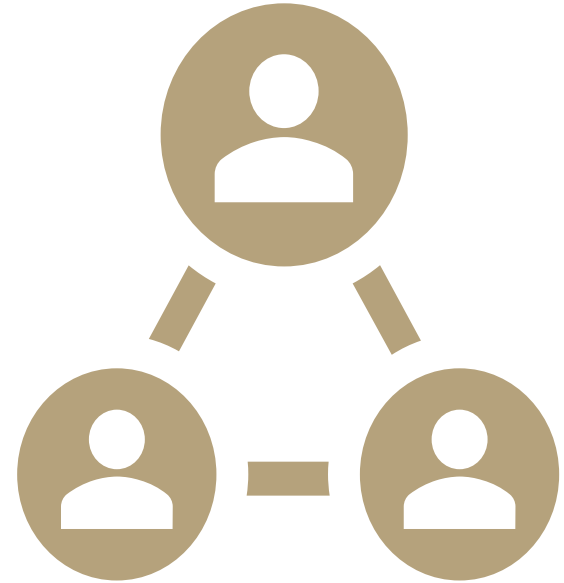
- Emphasizes the importance of partnership and what partners gain by participating, including:
 - Access to technical resources and expertise
 - Enhanced capabilities through networking and partnerships
 - Competitive advantage through funding partnerships
 - Diverse perspectives for shared learning
 - Sharing project outcomes and research findings
 - Monthly newsletter for funding opportunities and partner communication



COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND SUCCESSES

Education and Outreach Committee

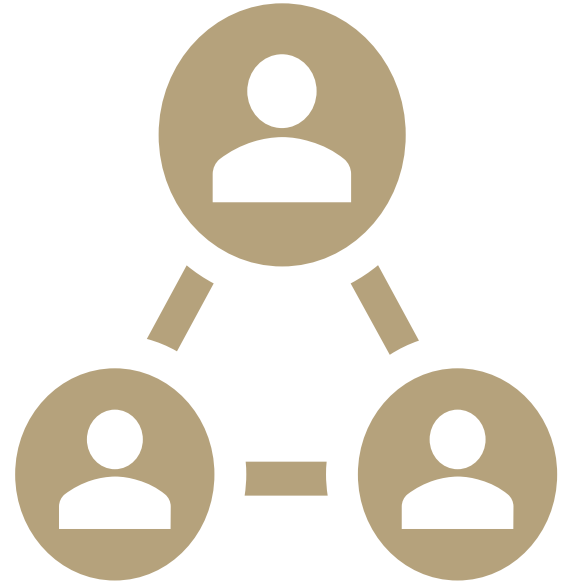
- Creation of professional development units on water education
- Contributions to:
 - Water Education Colorado's Water 2022 Campaign
 - Barr Milton Watershed Association Phosphorus-Free Fertilizer Campaign
 - Lincoln Hills Cares South Platte Youth Advisory Council
 - CSU Spur Campus



COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND SUCCESSES

Science and Data Committee

- Development and updates to the South Platte River Water Quality Assessment Tool
- Development of USGS Urban Waters Federal Partnership funding applications
 - Longitudinal nutrient study of the South Platte River
 - Geomorphological Study of the South Platte River (funded elsewhere)

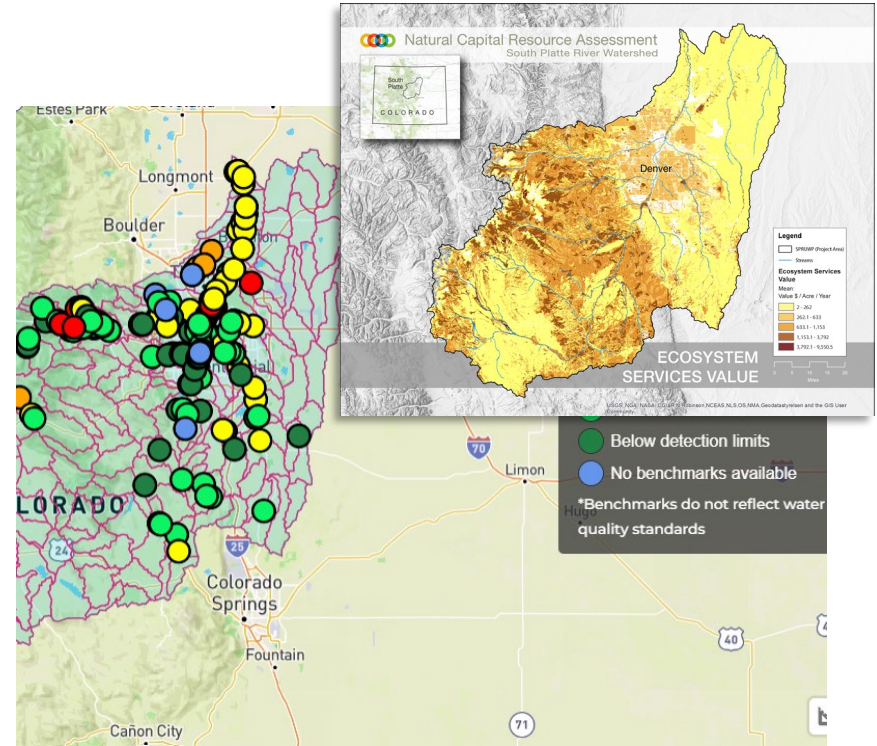




SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Two tools highlighted:

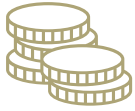
- South Platte Watershed Natural Capital Tool
- Water Quality Assessment Tool





OTHER PRIORITY PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY SPRUWP

- Full-time coordinator
- Geomapping (no longer supported)
- Systems thinking (2013)
- Urban forestry (2012)
- Wildfire Workshop (2013)
- Green infrastructure virtual tour
- Partnerships with Denver Urban Field Station and Metro Denver Nature Alliance
- Denver Climate-Smart Cities
- Nutrient study of the South Platte River
- SPRUWP webpage



GRANT AWARDS

- EPA Environmental Justice Small Grants
- Urban Water Small Grants
- Recipients include:
 - Groundwork Denver
 - Lincoln Hills Cares
 - Environmental Learning for Kids
 - City and County of Denver
 - Barr Lake and Milton Reservoir Watershed Association
 - Earth Force
- Numerous brownfields grants



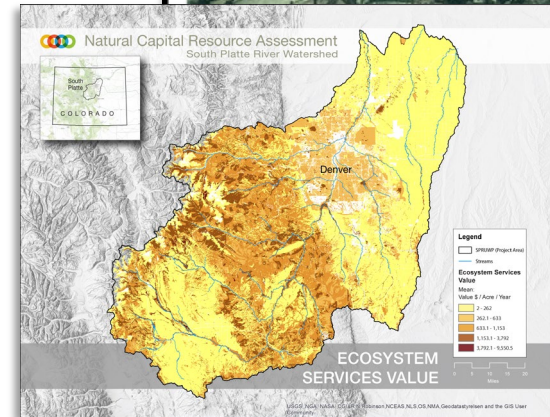
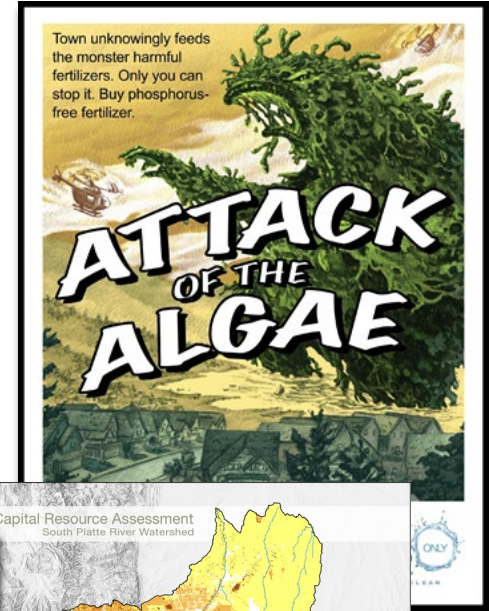


PLANNING FOR ACTION

- Outlines high level strategies from our 2021 strategic planning process
- Identifies significant challenges
 - Personnel turnover & inconsistent engagement
 - Funding
 - Fostering collaboration instead of competition
- Showcases significant action
 - Water Equity & Community Change Workshop

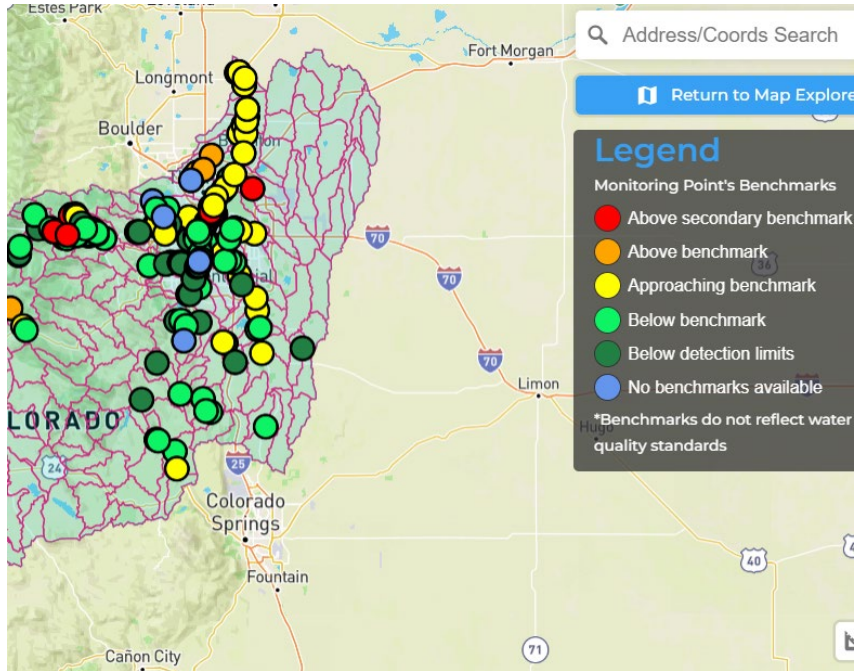
APPENDICES

- Partner membership
- Other relevant funding sources and initiatives and their benefits to partners
 - EPA-funded projects
 - USFS and Colorado State Forest Service programs
 - Science and research
 - Green infrastructure and brownfields grants
- Natural Capital maps
- SPRUWP and environmental justice projects
- Barr Lake-Milton Watershed water quality messaging



WQAT – WHY?

- Helps scientists, officials, and educators review and assess water quality data
- Allows members of the public to conveniently and easily track water quality data
- Increases access to water quality data to further understand pollution and strategies to improve water quality



UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

- Environmental Protection Agency Community Change Grants
 - \$2 billion dollars allocated for environmental and climate justice activities to benefit underserved communities
- US Geological Survey Urban Waters funding for scientific research
- US Army Corps South Platte Restoration Projects

SOUTH PLATTE RIVER URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIP

Education & Outreach Committee

Purpose

Provide opportunities for educators to collaborate on projects and share best practices to expand awareness and education of urban water issues and develop future water stewards and practitioners!

Benefits to Partners

- Expanded and strengthened capabilities through networking and partnership opportunities
- Opportunity to share and learn about ongoing projects and initiatives
- Learning through diverse perspectives on shared issues



Join the 2024 Conversation to Discuss...



- Success stories on how environmental justice grants are being used by educational groups
- Gaps in the workforce and how education can make a difference
- Opportunities to promote educational efforts that help the public understand the source of their water
- Expanding youth development in the Colorado Water Plan and South Platte River

SOUTH PLATTE RIVER URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIP

Science & Data Committee

Purpos

Develop projects devoted to improving and expanding access to data and scientific findings related to water quality and restoration!

Benefits to Partners

- Expanded and strengthened capabilities through networking and partnership opportunities
- Competitive edge through partnering for funding
- Learning through diverse perspectives on shared issues
- Access to technical resources and expertise



Join the 2024 Conversation to Discuss...



- Green infrastructure assessments and monitoring
- Relationship-building with other scientific groups conducting research on the South Platte
- New approaches to monitoring and assessing risk related to harmful algal blooms
- Updates to the 303(d) listing methodology
- Updates on geomorphology and aquatic biota studies on the South Platte River
- Opportunities to fill gaps in the scientific research of the South Platte River

RESOURCES

- SPRUWP website <https://www.urbanwaters.gov/splatte/index.html>
- SPRUWP video https://youtu.be/DN_5cDmy25M
- Water Quality Assessment Tool <https://exploremetrodenverwaterquality.org/>
- SPRUWP accomplishments reports <https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners/accomplishments-south-platte-watershed>
- Report of EPA working for over 10 years with the Denver Housing Authority on the Sun Valley neighborhood. <https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners/sun-valley-10-year-summary>

CONTAMINATION ALONG THE SOUTH PLATTE

- Known contamination along the South Platte is complicated by the multiple environmental statutes that govern environmental cleanup including, brownfields, Superfund, RCRA, and TSCA.
- It's also complicated by the variety of property owners.
- Not all environmental data is publicly shared.
- Cleanup would depend on the contaminants present and their mobility, future use and the possibility of exposure, and the governing statute.

Questions

Zach Clayton, ELUP Section Supervisor

Dave Wilmoth, Brownfields Program Manager

Stacey Eriksen, EPA Brownfields and Urban Waters